



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

March 13, 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FROM:

Robert Raben

Assistant Attorney General

SUBJECT:

Weekly Report for March 13, 2000 - March 17, 2000

KEY ISSUES

**Nominations:** On March 7, the Senate confirmed the nomination of Julio Fuentes, to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, by a vote of 93-0. On March 8, the Senate approved cloture on the nominations of Marsha Berzon and Richard Paez, both to be United States Circuit Judges for the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The vote on Berzon was 86-13; Paez, 85-14. Marsha Berzon was subsequently confirmed on March 9 by a vote of 64-34. Senator Sessions filed a motion to indefinitely postpone the Richard Paez nomination. That motion failed by a vote of 31-67 and Richard Paez was then confirmed by vote of 59-39.

On March 2, the nomination of Bonnie Campbell to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit was sent to the Senate. (Scott-Finan)

**Fetal Tissue Hearing:** The Health and Environment Subcommittee (Bilirakis, Chair) of the House Commerce Committee held a hearing on March 9 regarding the alleged illegal sale of fetal tissue. The Department did not testify, but sent a letter stating we would look into any allegations of federal violations we receive. (First/Ho)

**H-1B Visa:** On March 9, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed the Hatch-Abraham H-1B bill, which raises the cap on H-1B visas to 195,000. (First)

**Trafficking:** The Immigration and Claims Subcommittee (Smith, Chair) of the House Judiciary Committee marked up the "T" visa provision of H.R. 3244, the Smith-Gejdenson sexual trafficking bill, with one amendment that narrows the language of the bill. (First)

THE WEEK AHEAD

**Partial Birth Abortion:** The House Judiciary Committee (Hyde, Chair) was scheduled to consider the Partial Birth Abortion Act of 2000, H.R. 3660, but consideration was postponed until this week. (First)

**Asbestos Compensation Legislation:** On March 9, the House Judiciary Committee (Hyde, Chair) began markup of H.R. 1283, the Asbestos Compensation Act of 2000. A rare evening markup got off to a contentious start with Democrats declaring the bill to have an adverse impact on African Americans. The markup is scheduled to continue on March 14 when the Committee is expected to continue work on some 80-100 Democratic amendments. The Department sent a letter opposing the bill. (Wilson)

**Bankruptcy:** Conferees still have not been appointed. We have finished compiling Department comments on the bill and have begun meeting with key staff during this week. The Administration's letter is currently in clearance and is expected to be cleared this week. (Wilson)

**Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Legislation:** Department staff continue to meet with staff for Chairman Hatch and Senators Leahy, Sessions and Schumer, regarding the civil asset reform legislation in an attempt to work out differences between competing bills. Action on the bill, H.R. 1658, was deferred for another week. (Daley)

**Takings:** H.R. 2372 is expected to be considered on the House floor on Thursday, March 16. You have indicated that you will recommend a veto to the President if the bill reaches the President in its current form. (Pearlman)

#### THE WEEK IN REVIEW

**Native American Issues:** On March 9 and 10, staff from the Office of Legislative Affairs, the Environment and Natural Resources Division, Department of the Interior and the Pueblo of Sandia met with Congressmen Skeen and Udall to brief them on the proposed settlement of the Pueblo of Sandia's land claim and discuss ratifying legislation. (Pearlman)

**Hearing on Cybercrime:** On March 8, the Deputy Attorney General testified before the Communications Subcommittee (Burns, Chair) of the Senate Commerce Committee on Cybercrime and recent "denial of service" attacks. (Daley)

**Antitrust Meeting:** On March 8, newly appointed Special Counsel for Agriculture, Doug Ross, met with Senator Kohl to get acquainted. The Senator and his staff touched on various concerns regarding competition in agriculture, including possible anticompetitive conduct on the part of dairy cooperatives. (Slover)